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NATIONAL SCHOOL LUNCH PROGRAM

- A Progress Report



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PREFACE

For almost 20 years the Federal Government has given assistance to schools for the operation of nonprofit school lunch programs.

In the beginning, the Program was one of the ways developed to provide a constructive use for surplus foods that could not move through regular market channels at prices fair to farmers. Congress continued this assistance because of its demonstrated effectiveness in improving the diets of school children and in expanding domestic food markets. In June 1946 the Program was authorized on a permanent basis by the National School Lunch Act.

This publication is a report on the

progress of the National School Lunch Program since 1944, the first year Federal cash assistance funds were made available.

The charts presented here trace the growth of the Program--in terms of the number of participating children and the number of meals served. They show the extent to which the Program is fulfilling its nutritional and agricultural objectives--the high quality of the meals served and the large quantities of food used. Finally, by showing how the Program is financed, the charts demonstrate that Federal, State and local governments--and the parents of school children--share responsibility for school lunches.

THE NATIONAL SCHOOL LUNCH PROGRAM

Through the National School Lunch Program, important contributions have been made by the States and the Federal Government to the development and expansion of school food services. The Program has promoted the acceptance of high standards for school feeding operations and has helped local communities to operate the kind of lunch program that provides maximum benefits to participating children.

Under the National School Lunch Act, State educational agencies are responsible for the administration of the Federal assistance program within the States. The U. S. Department of Agriculture administers the Program nationally and provides the following types of assistance:

- Cash Payments - to assist schools to make local food purchases
- Food commodities - purchased especially for the Program or donated from supplies purchased under market stabilization programs
- Technical assistance - on food purchase and use, and on food management problems.

The standards for school feeding services required of schools receiving Federal assistance are:

- ... Programs must be operated on a nonprofit basis
- ... Schools must serve meals meeting good nutritional standards
- ... Children unable to pay the full price of the lunch must be served free or at reduced cost, without discrimination.

EVERY YEAR THE PROGRAM REACHES MORE CHILDREN

In 9 years the number of children participating in the National School Lunch Program has more than doubled and is increasing at a rate of 8 to 10 percent each year.

Federal cash assistance to school lunch programs was first provided in 1944 and that year the Program reached over 3,760,000 children. By 1947, the first year of operation under the National School Lunch Act, 6,000,000

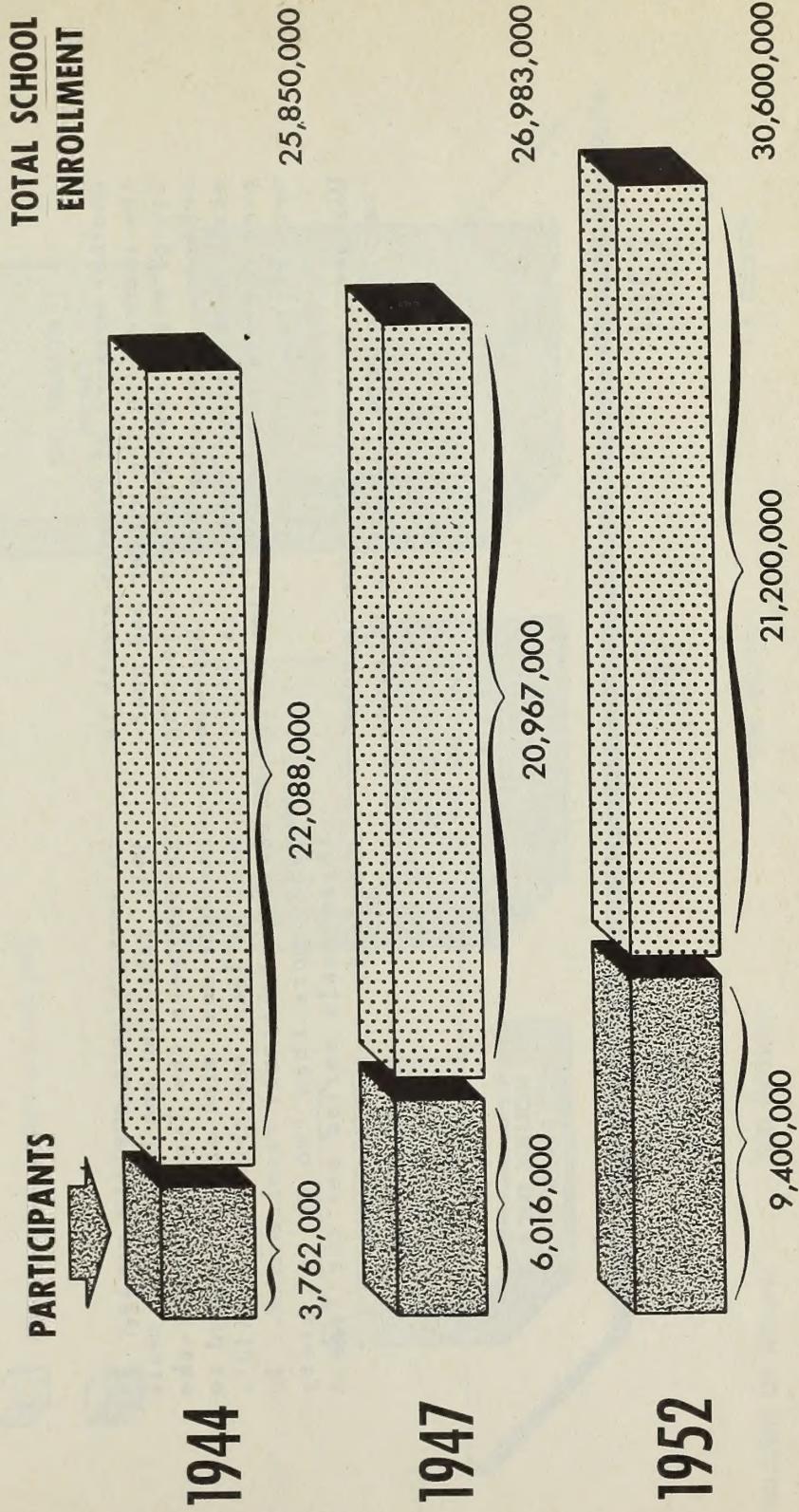
children were participating. Since 1947, participation has increased year-by-year to a total of 9,400,000 children in 1952.

The National School Lunch Program was reaching approximately 30 percent of the children enrolled in school in 1952. However, school enrollment and, thus, potential participation also is increasing.

NOTE: The dates used in this publication refer to the school year ending in June of the year indicated. Data for 1952, the 1951-52 school year, are preliminary.

From 1944 to 1952 . . .

More than twice as many children participating



EVERY YEAR THE SCHOOLS SERVE MORE AND BETTER MEALS

Another measure of Program growth is the increase in the number and quality of meals served by participating schools. Less than half a billion meals were served in 1944; in 1952, over one-and-one-half billion meals were served.

Moreover, many schools have improved their lunchroom facilities in order

to serve higher quality meals. In 1944, less than one-half of the meals served were the Type A lunch--the complete meal with milk--designed to meet at least one-third of a child's daily nutritional requirements. In 1952, more than two out of every three meals served met the Type A standard.

From 1944 to 1952 . . .

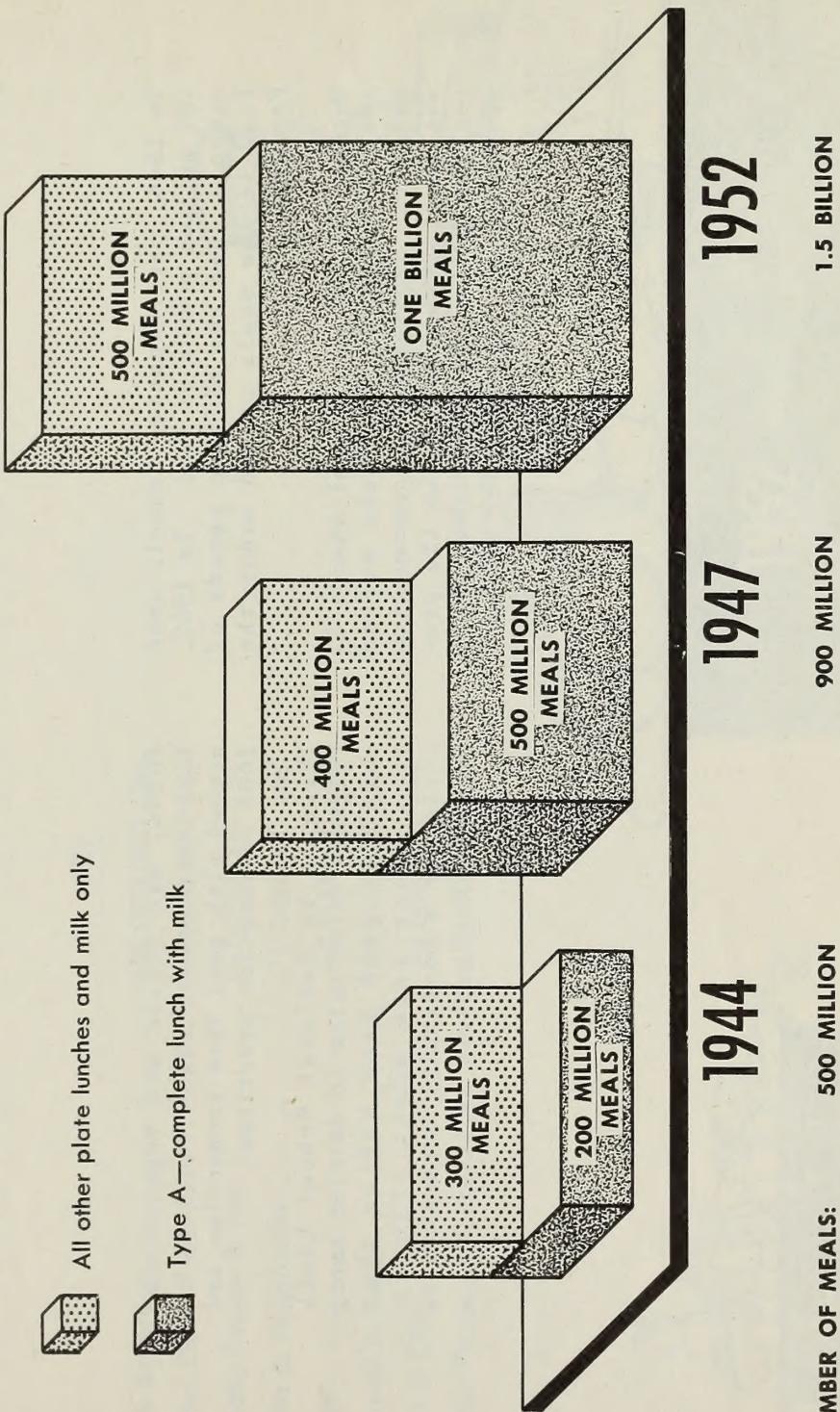
Three times as many meals served



All other plate lunches and milk only



Type A—complete lunch with milk



NUMBER OF MEALS:

500 MILLION

900 MILLION

1.5 BILLION

EVERY YEAR THE PROGRAM USES MORE FOOD

In 1944, participating schools used 500 million pounds of food. In 1952, schools used two billion pounds of food in the meals served under the Program.

Because of the nutritional standards established for the meals served under the Program, this consumption was concentrated mostly in the protective foods--milk and other dairy products, meats and other protein

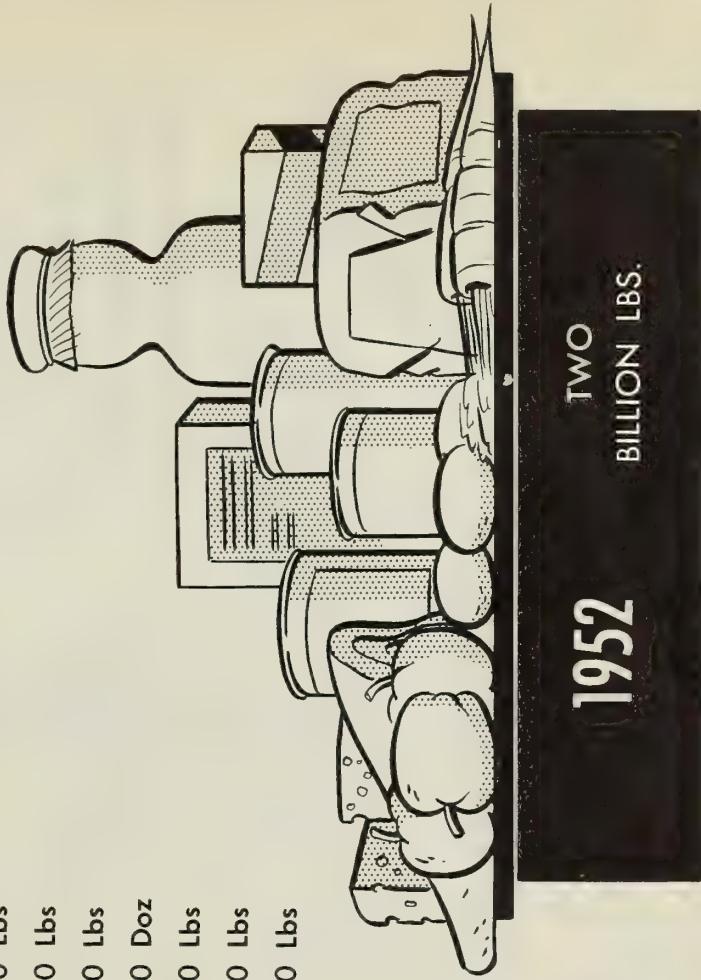
foods, and fruits and vegetables. Increased use of these foods is in accord with good farm production and food consumption practices.

Through the National School Lunch Program--which helps to develop among children good food habits that carry over into adult life--a basis for a continuing expansion in domestic food markets is being built.

From 1944 to 1952 . . .

Four times as much food used

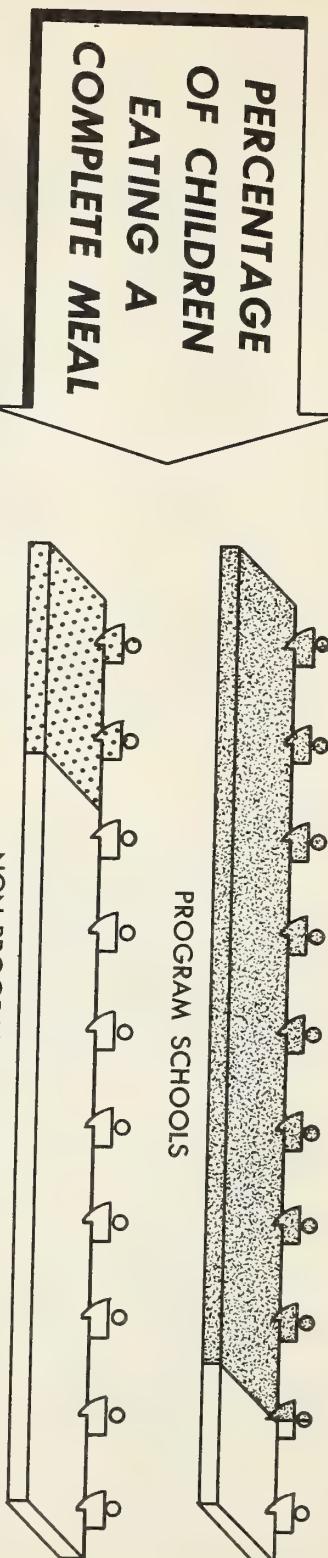
<u>1952</u>	
Milk Beverage.....	359,000,000 Qts
Other Dairy Products.....	248,000,000 Lbs
Meats, Poultry & Fish.....	117,000,000 Lbs
Fruits & Vegetables.....	570,000,000 Lbs
Eggs.....	25,000,000 Doz
Cereals & Bread.....	142,000,000 Lbs
Fats & Oils.....	34,000,000 Lbs
Other Foods.....	43,000,000 Lbs



A SURVEY SHOWS THE

In Program Schools . . .

Many more children eat complete lunches



The charts on these two pages are based on a survey* made of the lunches purchased by children in eight pairs of representative schools located in various geographic regions of the country. The schools in each pair were comparable as to the type of school and the economic status of the

neighborhood in which the school was located. One school of each pair was participating in the National School Lunch Program.

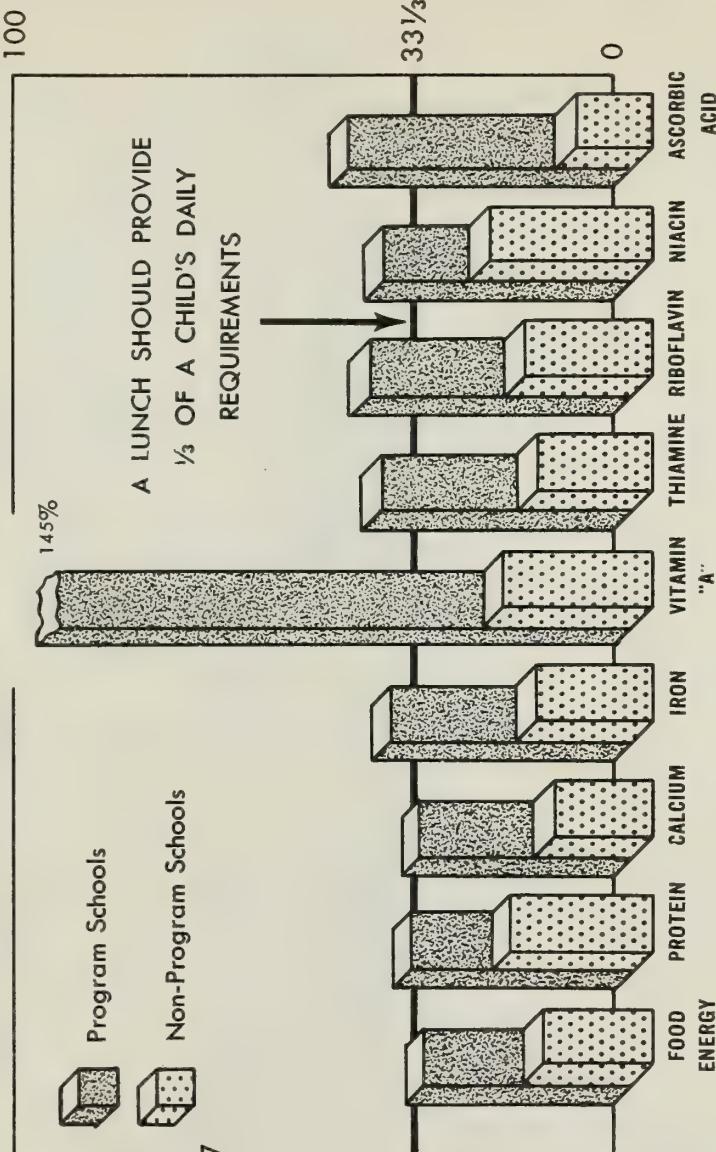
*SOURCE: Bureau of Human Nutrition and Home Economics, U.S.D.A., 1950.

ENEFITS TO CHILDREN

In Program Schools . . .

The same amount of money buys a better lunch

THE NUTRITIVE VALUE OF A 22 CENT LUNCH



Although 22 percent of the children in these non-program schools purchased a complete lunch at an average cost of 40 cents, the most frequently selected lunch in these schools cost 22 cents--the same price as the complete

(Type A) lunch in program schools. The above chart compares the nutritive value of the most frequently selected lunches in these non-program schools with the Type A lunches served in program schools.

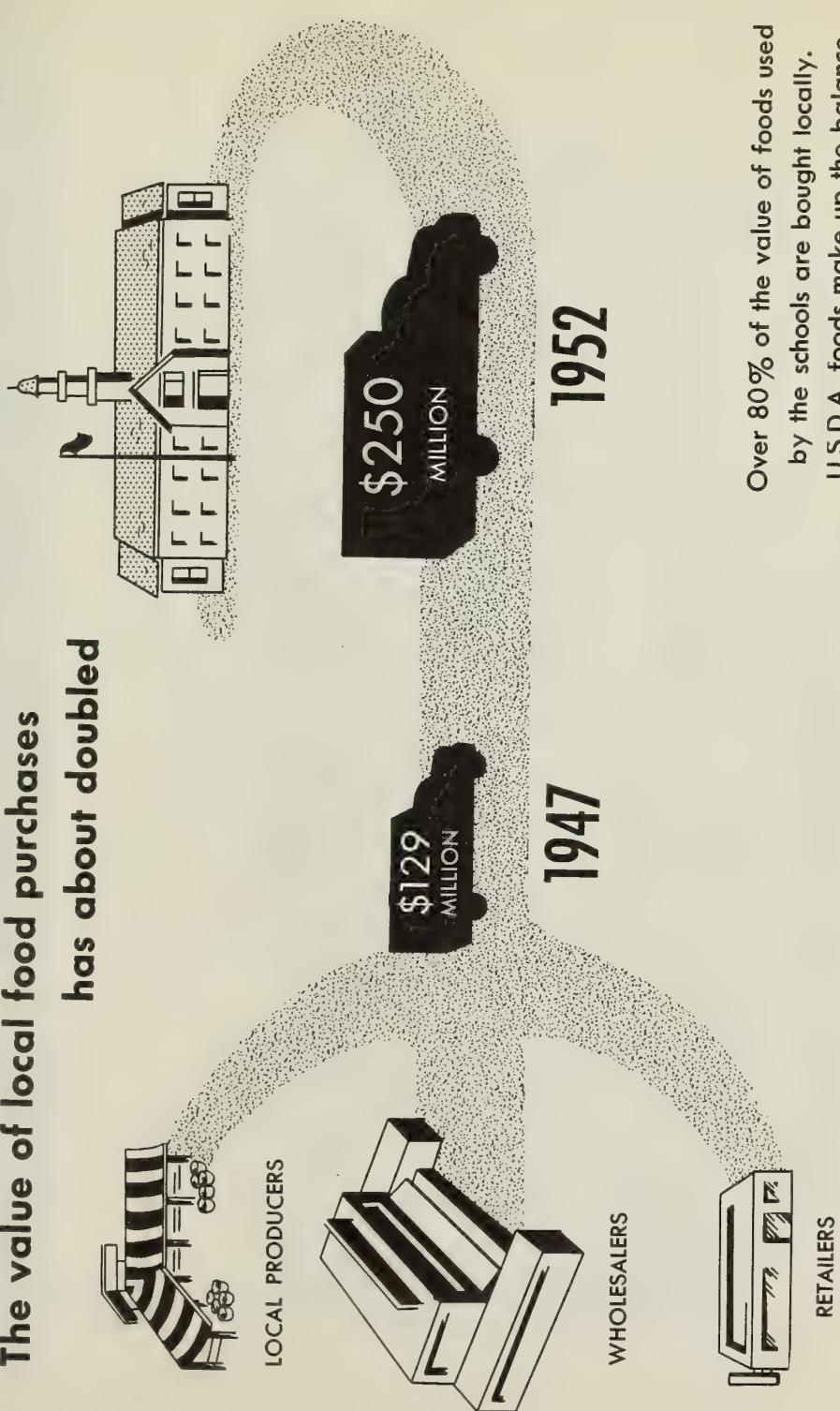
MOST OF THE FOOD USED IN THE PROGRAM IS PURCHASED LOCALLY

As more and better meals have been served under the Program, schools have purchased larger and larger quantities of food from local wholesalers, retailers and producers. In the 6 years of operation under the National School Lunch Act, the value of the food purchased locally by schools increased from approximately \$129 million in 1947 to \$250 million in 1952. These local purchases represent over 80 percent of the value of all foods used by the schools.

The food commodities supplied to schools by the Federal Government are used to supplement the food purchased locally. Schools obtain these commodities through their State distributing agencies in the amounts they can effectively use. They help schools to provide children with more adequate amounts of the nutrients commonly lacking in children's diets and add variety to the meals served.

From 1947 to 1952 . . .

The value of local food purchases
has about doubled



Over 80% of the value of foods used
by the schools are bought locally.
U.S.D.A. foods make up the balance.

FEDERAL, STATE AND LOCAL FUNDS FINANCE THE PROGRAM

Federal, State and local sources provided \$415 million for the operation of the Program in 1952. Of this amount, the Federal Government supplied approximately \$95 million—in cash and in commodities.

With more children participating and with higher operating expenses, total program costs have doubled since 1947. During the same period, the Federal appropriation has remained relatively constant.

The amount of additional Federal assistance, in the form of surplus foods contributed by the U. S. Department

of Agriculture, has varied each year, depending upon the need to purchase for market stabilization purposes. In 1950, the value of these commodities totalled \$38.5 million, but smaller quantities were available in 1951 and 1952.

Funds from State and local governments and from local organizations totalled \$85 million in 1952. Income from the sale of lunches (parents' payments) totalled about \$235 million. Together, the funds from these States and local sources financed about three-quarters of the total cost of the Program.

From 1947 to 1952 . . .

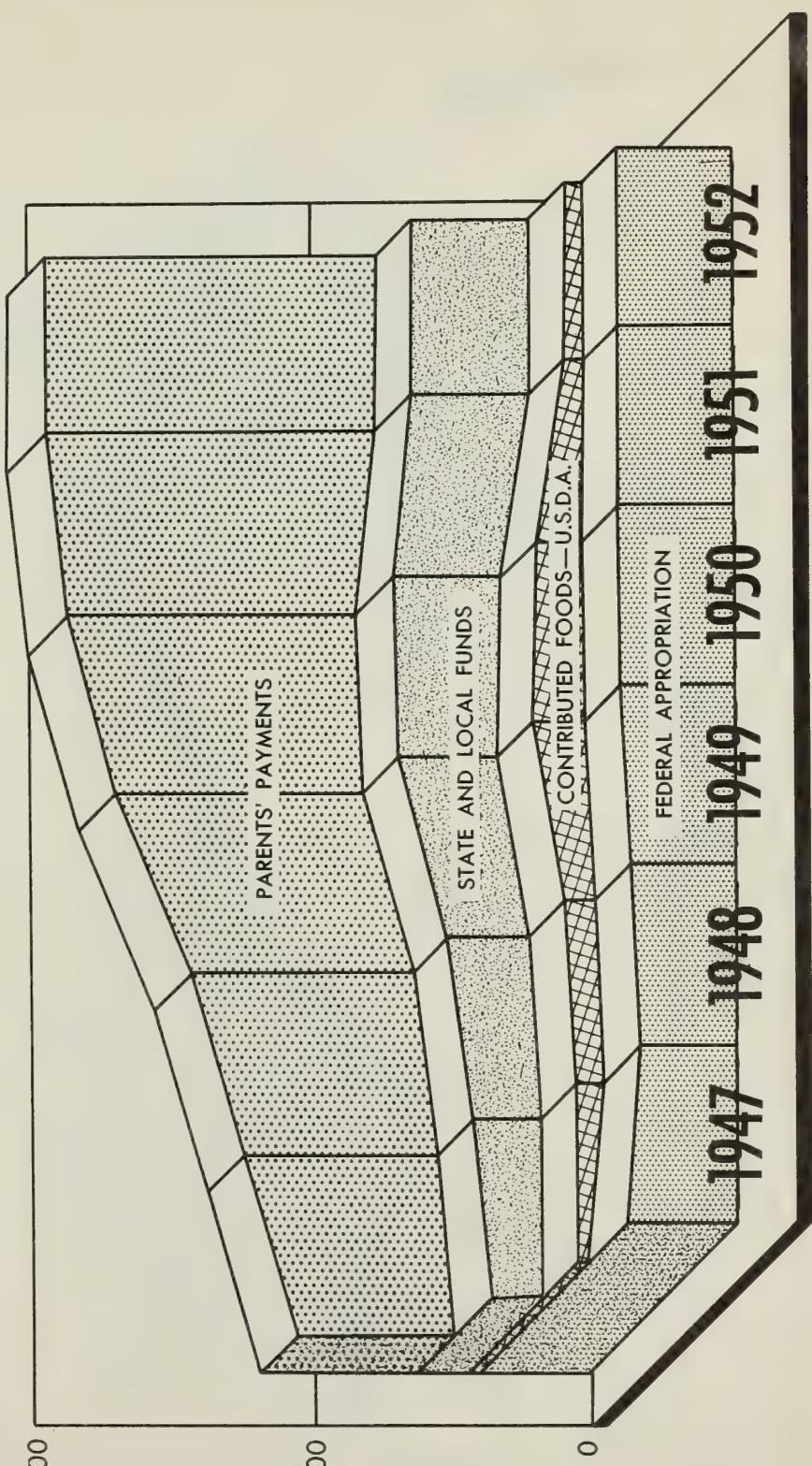
Total program costs have doubled

MILLION DOLLARS

400

200

0



FEDERAL FUNDS ARE NOW USED FOR A LARGER PROGRAM

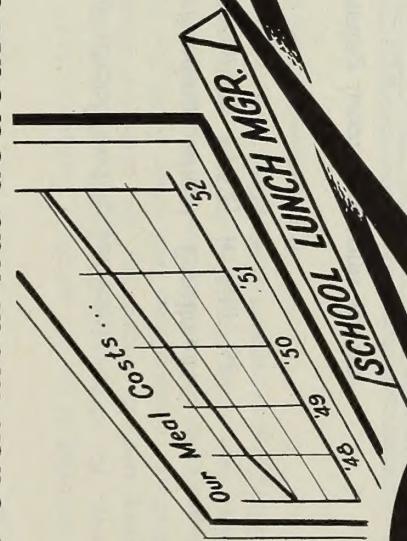
With the Federal appropriation being used to assist a larger program, each year per-meal rates of Federal cash assistance have declined. These are the payments made to participating schools to assist them to make local purchases of food.

In 1947, schools received 9 cents in cash assistance for each Type A meal served. In 1952, the average cash assistance rate for a Type A meal was about 6 cents. In some States the average Type A rate was 4 cents or lower. During the same period, the cost of preparing and serving a Type A meal increased by at least 25 percent.

During this period of steadily increasing operating costs and declining rates of Federal assistance, schools have taken all possible measures to maintain meal quality, short of increasing the price of the lunch. State and local governments and community organizations also have provided larger funds for the Program. Nevertheless, more and more schools are being forced to increase the prices charged for lunch and this often means that the children most in need of a good school lunch drop out of the Program.

From 1947 to 1952 • • •

The amount of Federal cash assistance
for each meal has decreased



Federal cash
assistance for
our Type A lunch

1947 9c
1952 6c

The price of
our lunch

1947 15c
1952 23c

WHAT'S AHEAD?

All signs point to an expansion in school feeding services:

- More children will be attending school. Enrollment totalled 30.6 million children in 1952; it will be 37 million by 1960.
- More communities are planning lunch programs as an essential auxiliary school service.
- More schools will be equipped with lunchroom facilities, as a result of the school construction program.

